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ACTION EA-19

INFO NSCE-00 CIAE-00 SSO-00 DODE-00 USIE-00 NSAE-00 SP-02 SS-35
GPM-03 SC-01 NSC-10 RSC-01 L-03 H-02 SAL-01 P-04 INR-07 AID-30
RSR-01 /119 W

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Dave Gamber DATE 12/23/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
REASON(S)
ENCLOSURE EXCISED MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
FA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

P 2509:8Z SEP 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7525

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6822

SUB: NATIONAL ELECTIONS : POLL-WATCHERS EMPLOYED BY CIVILIAN CANDIDATES

REF: STATE 042945

1. WE CAN ONLY ESTIMATE NUMBER OF POLL-WATCHERS EMPLOYED BY CIVILIAN CANDIDATES ON ELECTION DAY. THERE WERE 8,825 POLLING STATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY; WE DOUBT THAT MORE THAN HALF OF THEM WER VISITED EVEN ONCE BY A POLL-WATCHER POLLING STATIONS WERE OPEN TO OBSERVERS AND THIS FACT GENERALLY KNOWN, EVEN THOUGH OFFICIAL POLL-WATCHERS WERE NOT ABLE TO COVER MAJORITY OF POLLING STATIONS WE BELIEVE FACT

(1)

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STATIONS WERE OPEN TO OBSERVATION SERVED USEFUL PURPOSE IN REDUCING TEMPTATION OF LOCAL OFFICIALS TO MONKEY WITH RESULTS. WHERE OFFICIAL POLL-WATCHERS WERE PRESENT, THEIR ACTIVITIES ACTED AS SUBSTANTIAL GUARANTEE OF FAIR PLAY.

2. IN A FEW AREAS REPRESENTATIVES OF CIVILIAN CANDIDATES

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CLAIMED THEY WOULD HAVE OBSERVERS AT EACH POLLING STATION. BEFORE THE ELECTION, FOR EXAMPLE, TRAN VAN HUONG REPRESENTATIVE IN DINH TUONG ASSERTED THERE WOULD BE HUONG OBSERVERS AT EACH POLLING PLACE, AND IN VINH LONG BOTH DZU AND HIEP REPRESENTATIVES MADE SIMILAR CLAIMS. IN NEITHER PROVINCE WERE THERE OBSERVERS ON ELECTION DAY FOR ALL POLLING STATIONS, HOWEVER.

3. EMBOFF FOUND THIEU/KY POLL-WATCHERS AT EACH OF FOUR POLLING PLACES HE VISITED IN BIEN HOA ON ELECTION DAY. HE ALSO MET ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF UPPER HOUSE LIST NUMBER 13 (TRAN VAN DONG) AND ONE OBSERVER OF LIST NUMBER 40 (NGUYEN VAN HUYEN).
IN LAI THIEU DISTRICT OF BINH DUONG, EMBOFF FOUND TEN OBSERVERS IN A TOTAL OF FIVE POLLING PLACES--FIVE FOR THIEU / KY AND FIVE FOR VARIOUS CIVILIAN SLATES. FAIRLY NUMEROUS OBSERVERS

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WERE REPORTED IN GIA DINH. A FREQUENT PRACTICE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN FOR POLL-WATCHERS TO TRAVEL THROUGHOUT A PROVINCE OR DISTRICT: SOMETIMES OBSERVERS FOR COMPETING SLATES WOULD TRAVEL TOGETHER AS IN BIEN HOA WHERE EMBOFF ENCOUNTERED POLL-WATCHERS FOR HUONG AND HA THUC KY TRAVELLING ABOUT TOGETHER. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN REPORTS OF INSTANCES WHERE ONE POLL-WATCHER SERVED TWO OR MORE CANDIDATES.

4. OFFICIAL OBSERVERS WERE MORE NUMEROUS IN URBAN AND SEMI-URBAN AREAS THAN IN MORE PURELY RURAL DISTRICTS, BUT EVEN INFHE CITIES COVERAGE WAS FAR FROM COMPLETE. AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, POLL WATCHERS WERE FAR MORE NUMEROUS FOR PRESIDENTIAL SLATES THAN FOR UPPER HOUSE LISTS, PERHAPS CIVILIAN CANDIDATES BEST REPRESENTED AT THE POLLING PLACES WERE HUONG AND DZU, AND IN I CORP HA THUC KY. IN MOST AREAS, HOWEVER, SLATE WHICH HAD MOST OBSERVERS WAS THIEU/KY.
BUNKER